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House Judiciary Committee Approves Bill to Curb Human Trafficking

Tallahassee, Fla. – The House Judiciary Committee today approved a bill to strengthen Florida's human trafficking laws and provide law enforcement officials and prosecutors with additional tools to combat these crimes across Florida. The bill is sponsored by House Judiciary Chairman William Snyder (R-Stuart) and supported by Florida's Attorney General Pam Bondi.

"Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery and it has become particularly more common in Florida in recent years," said Chairman Snyder. "I appreciate the committee for recognizing the need to protect the basic human rights and I look forward to when the House passes this important bill."

"We must strengthen laws and enhance penalties to stop human trafficking, and I am grateful to Chairman Snyder for his leadership and to the House Judiciary Committee for their efforts in protecting people from the indignity and devastation of modern slavery with this legislation," said Attorney General Bondi.

The bill helps to strengthen Florida's human trafficking laws and stiffen penalties for anyone involved in human trafficking. Presently, most trafficking cases in Florida are brought in federal court under the federal law – with substantial assistance provided by Florida law enforcement agencies. Under the bill, jurisdiction on these multi-jurisdictional cases of human trafficking would be granted to the Statewide Prosecutor.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services lists human trafficking as the second largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world. Given Florida's geography, rapidly growing population and high number of visitors every year, human trafficking has increasingly become a problem around the state.

In many instances, victims of human trafficking are forced to work in prostitution or the sex entertainment industry. Additionally, they may be subjected to labor exploitation, such as domestic servitude, restaurant work, janitorial work, sweatshop factory work and migrant agricultural work.

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